

Three bright green apples are arranged on a white background. One apple is in the foreground, slightly to the right, and two are behind it, one to the left and one to the right. The apples are glossy and have short brown stems.

Serving Our Older Adults: Participation in Nutrition Assistance Programs

Jenny Laster Genser
September 14, 2005

Background

- Millions of older adults (age 60 plus) participated in a nutrition assistance program in 2004.



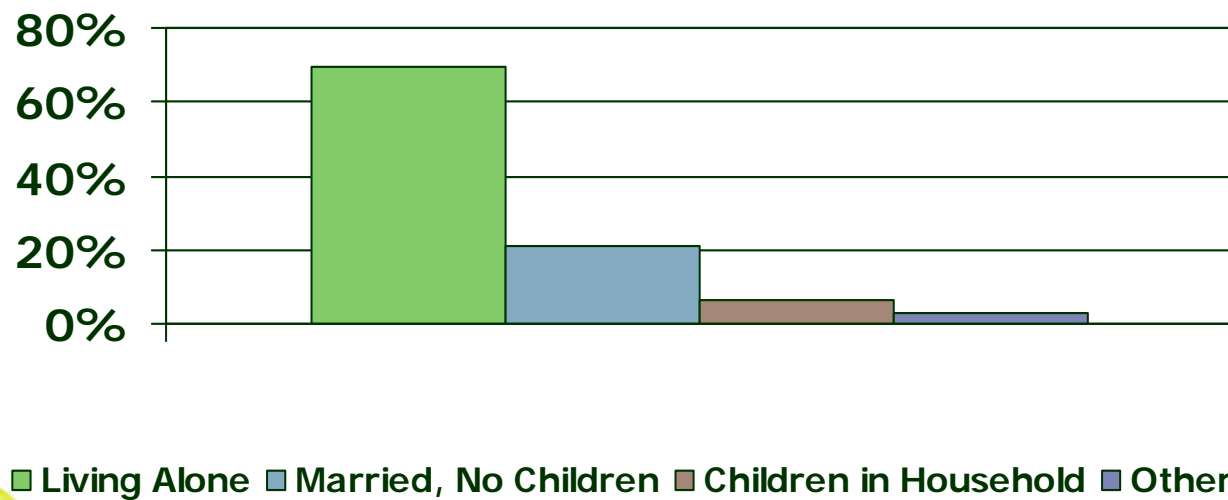
Programs Serving Older Adults

- Food Stamp Program -- nearly 2 million.
- Food pantries -- 1 million elders.
- Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program -- 800,000 elders.
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program -- 460,000 elders.
- Child and Adult Care Food Program -- 100,000.
- Nutrition Assistance Program in Puerto Rico
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.



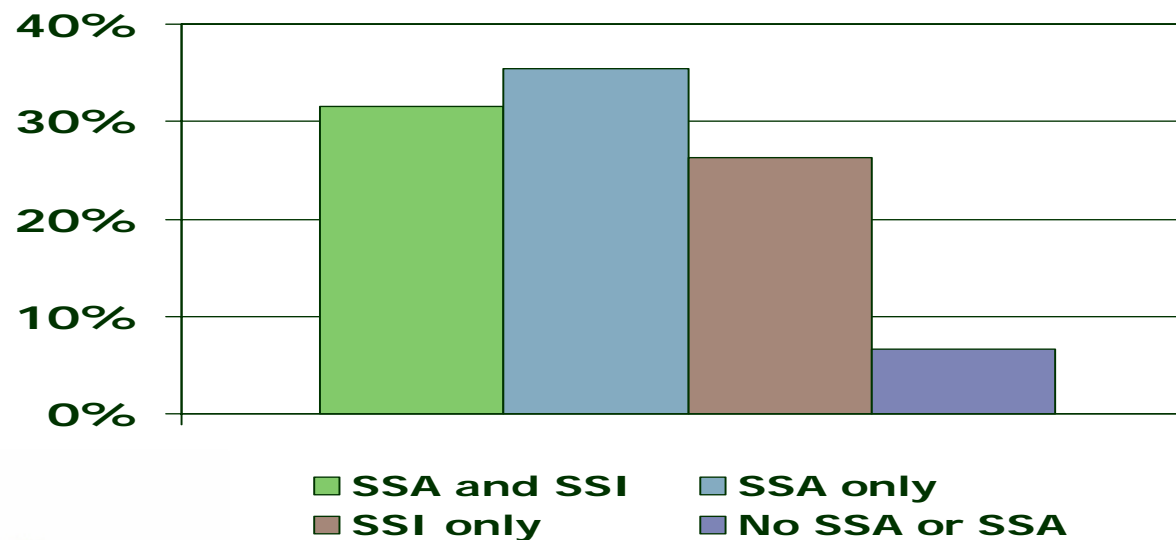
Food Stamp Program: Living Arrangements

- Most older adults (70 percent) live alone.
- The average household size for households with older adults is 1.3 persons.



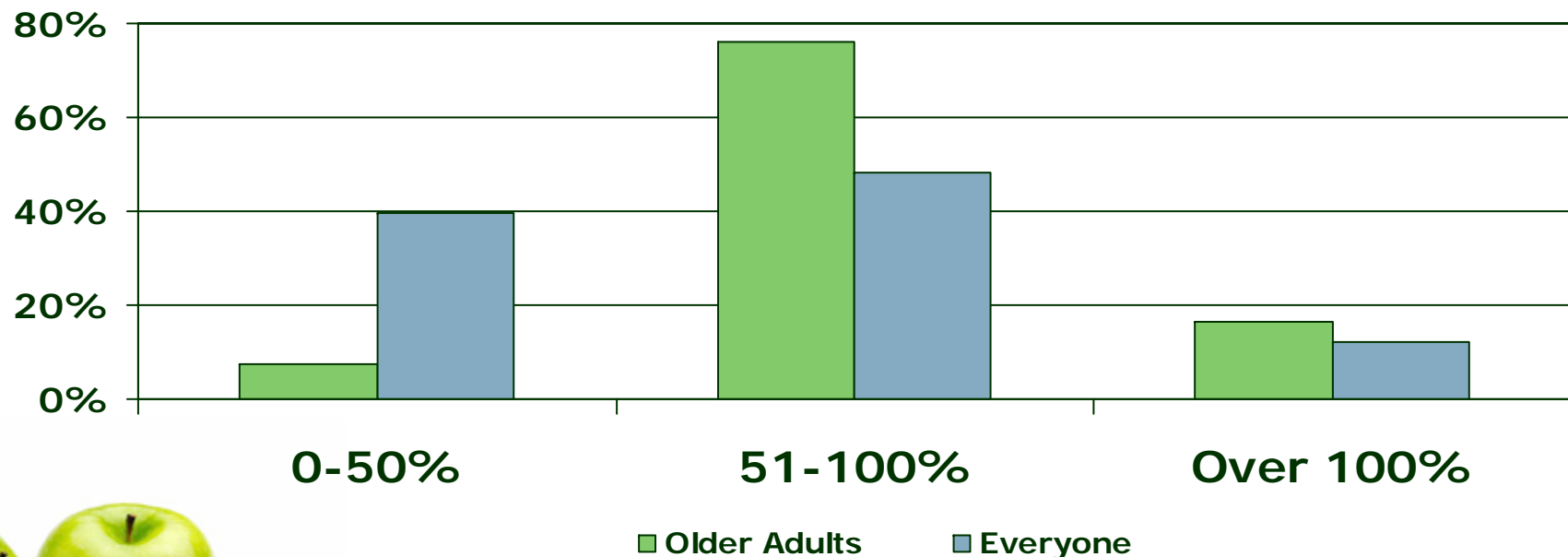
Food Stamp Program: Sources of Income

- Most older adult rely on Social Security and Supplemental Security Income.



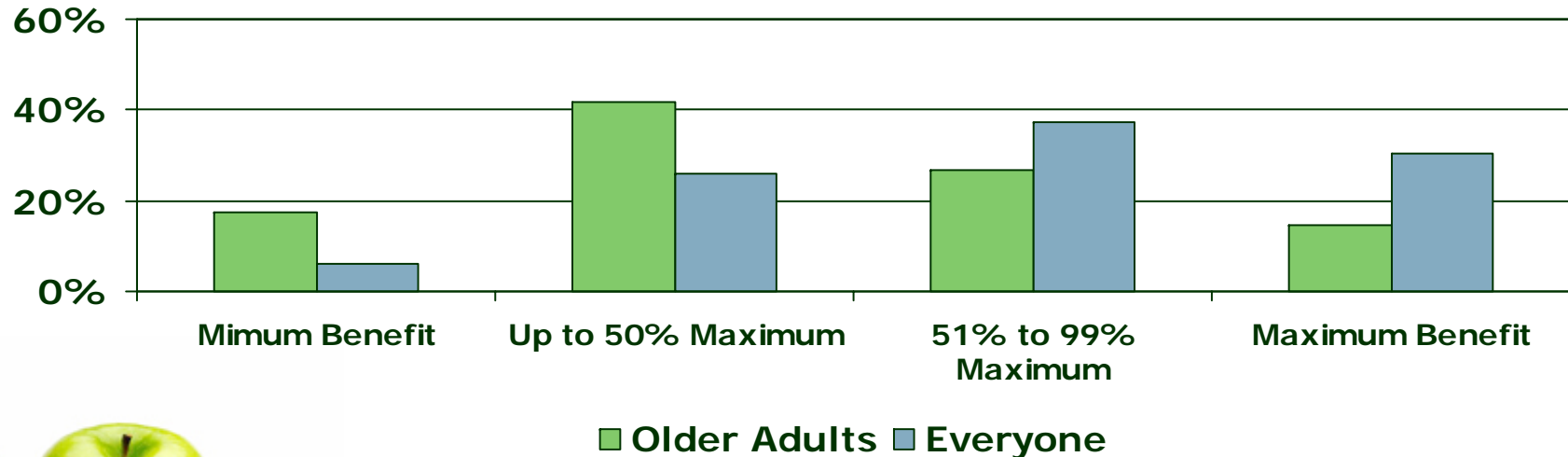
Food Stamp Program: Poverty Status of Older Adults

- Food Stamp households with older adults are poor, but not as poor as other participants



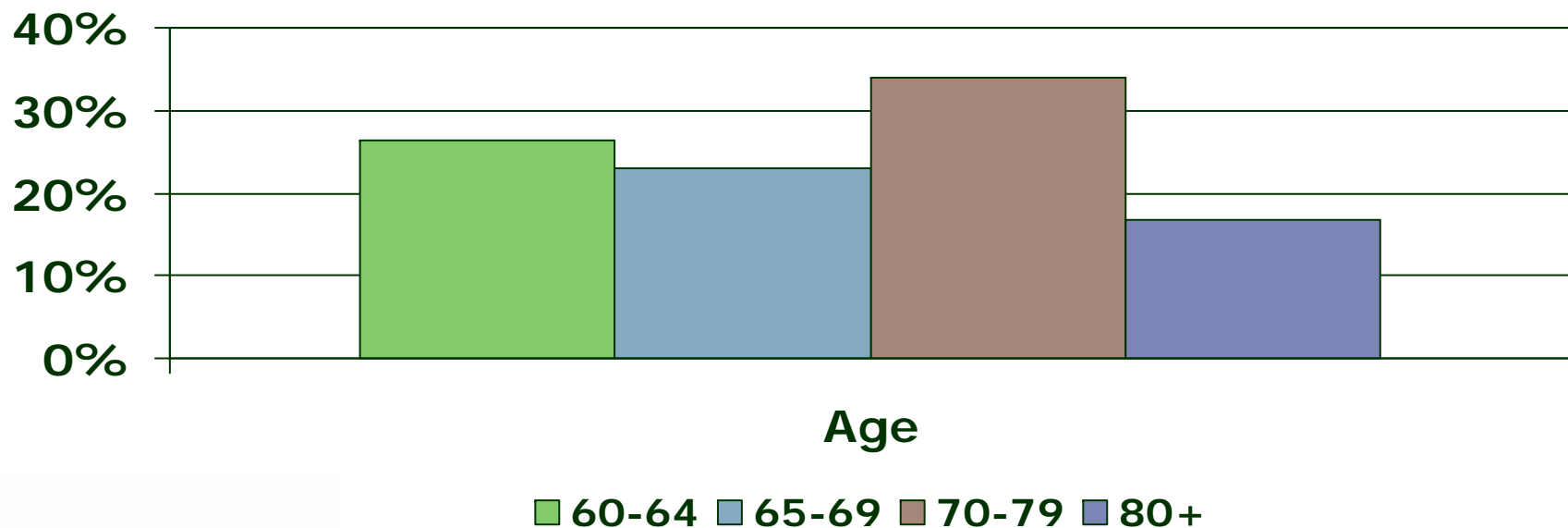
Food Stamp Program: Benefit Size

- Older adult participants receive smaller benefits.
- Over one-sixth of older adult participants receive the \$10 minimum benefit.
- Few older adults receive the maximum allotment.



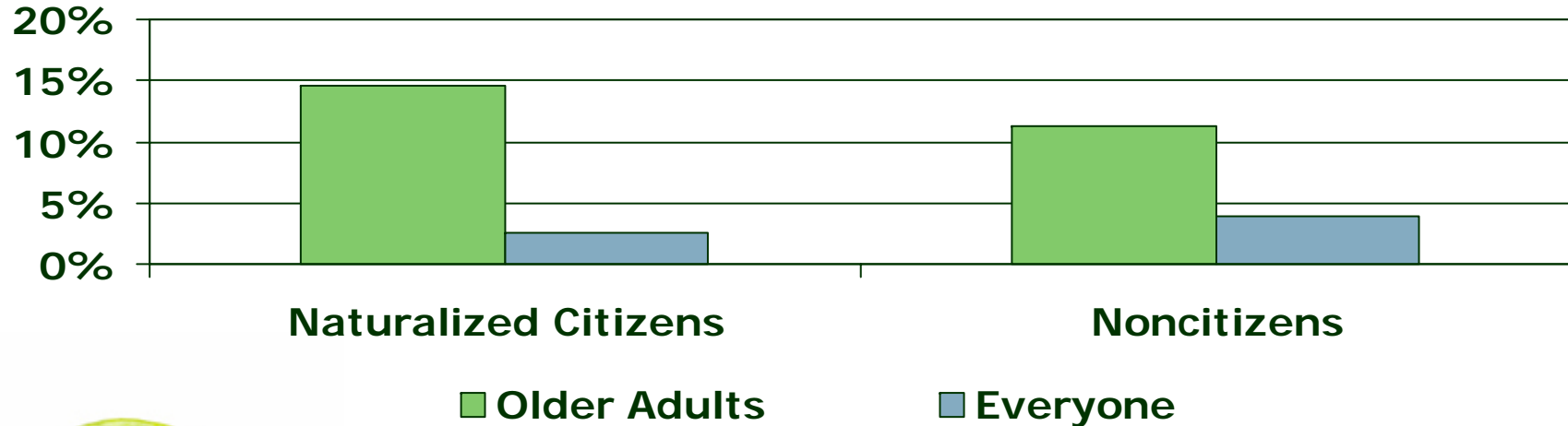
Food Stamp Program: Age

- The average older adult participant is 71.



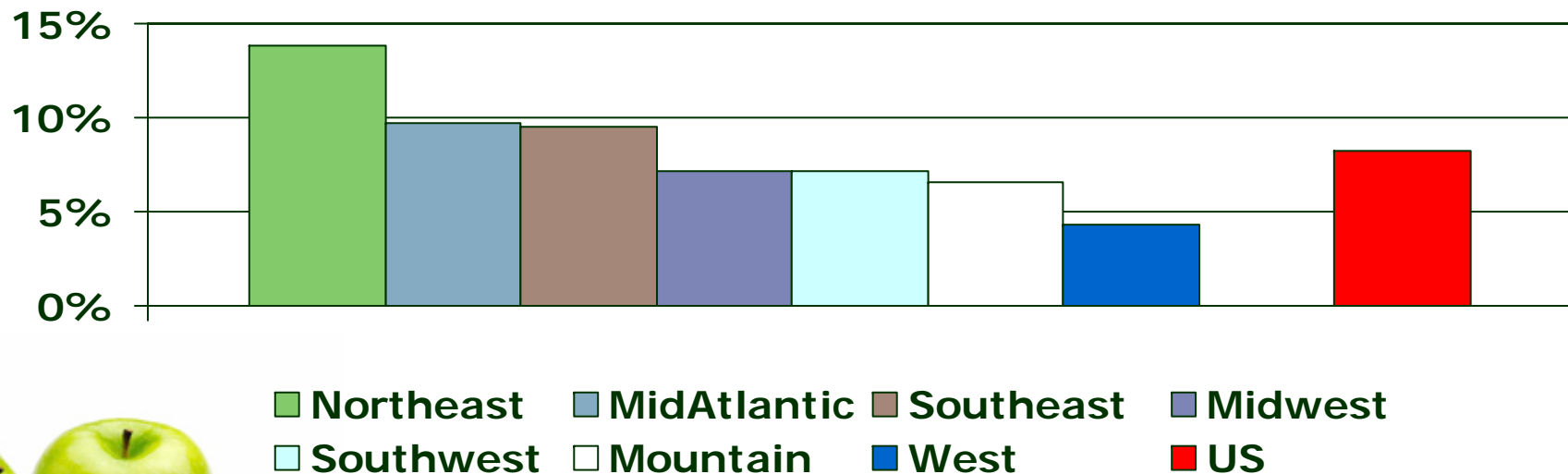
Food Stamp Program: Immigrant Status

- Older adult participants are nearly six times as likely to be naturalized citizens and nearly three times as likely to be noncitizens as younger participants.



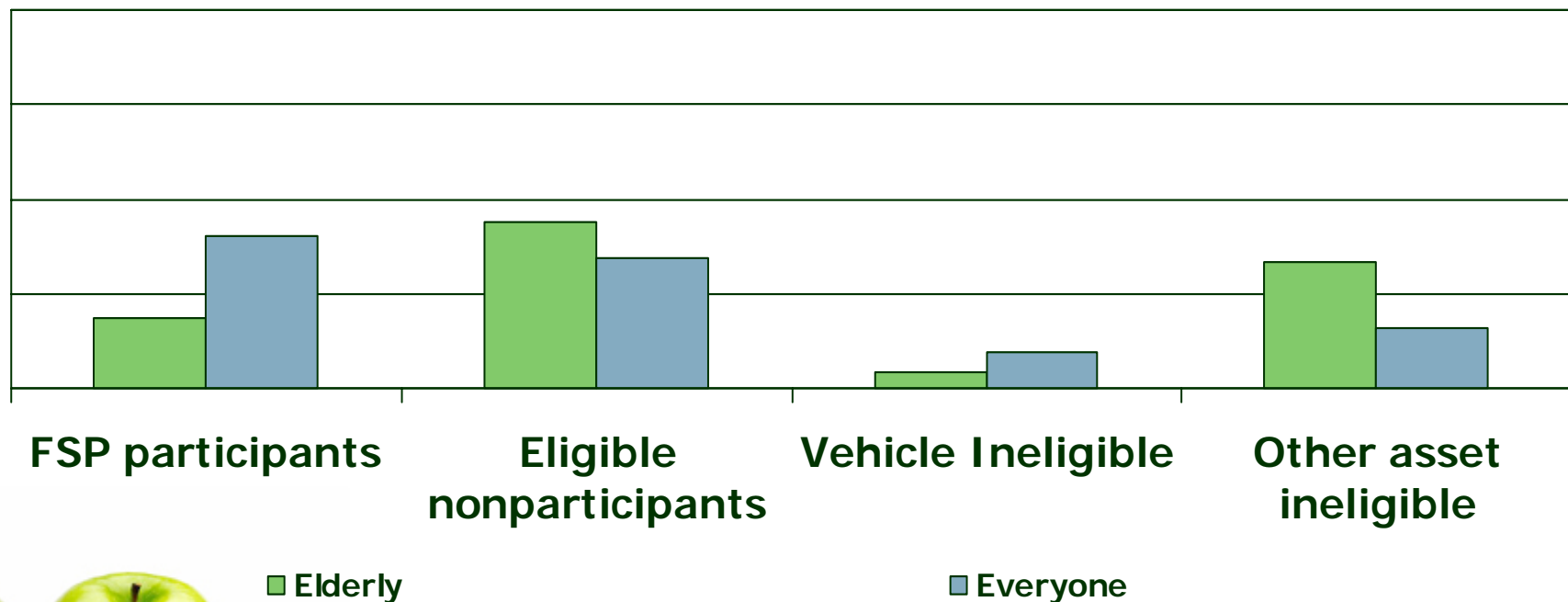
Food Stamp Program: Geographic Distribution

- The Eastern regions have a higher percentage of participants who are older adults than the Midwest, Mountain Plains, or Western regions.



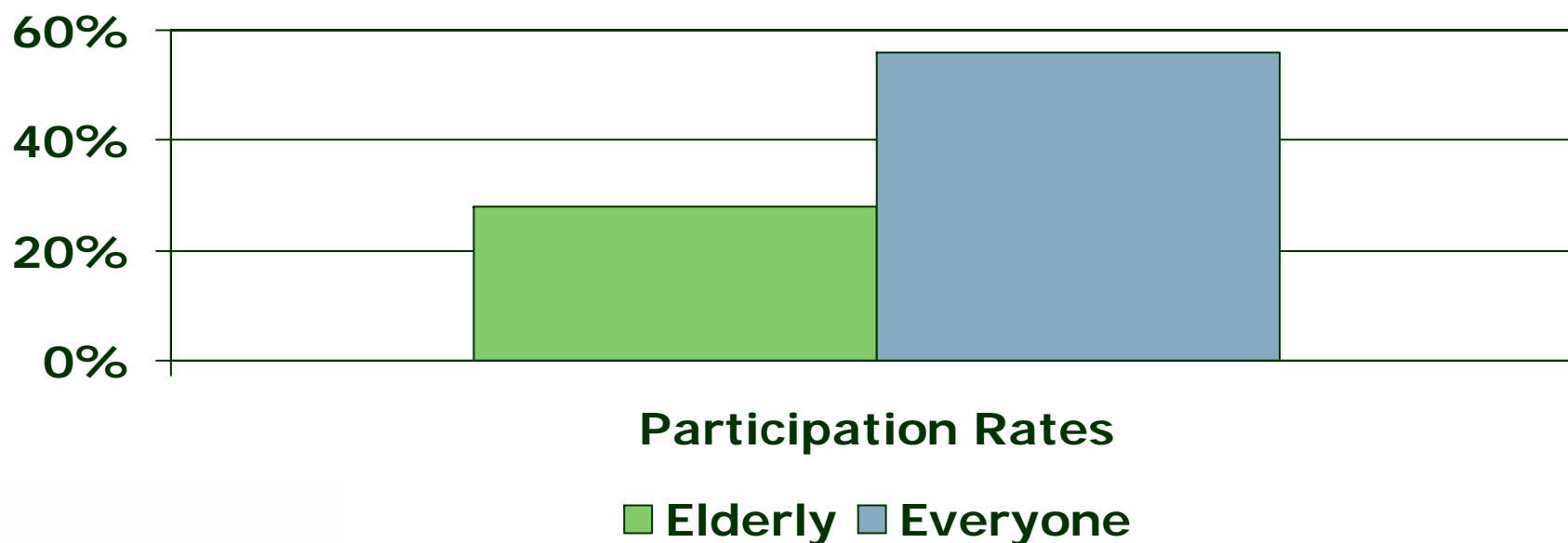
Food Stamp Program: Reasons for Nonparticipation

- More older adults have assets that make them ineligible for food stamps.



Food Stamp Participation Rates

- A lower percentage of eligible older adults participate in the Food Stamp Program.



Data Sources

- Participation figures for the CSFP and the CACFP obtained from National Data Bank.
- Participation figures for the FSP, as well as characteristics information, obtained from preliminary 2004 FSP Quality Control data.
- Participation from the SFMNP obtained from FNS web site.



Data Sources

- The number of older adults receiving food from food pantries obtained from ERS study *The Emergency Food Assistance System: Findings from the Client Survey*.
- FSP participation rates obtained from *Food Stamp Program Participation Rates: Fiscal Year 2003*.

